

Lake County SUMMER 2010 Connection



Message From The County Board Chairman

Dear Lake County Residents,

In this newsletter, we answer residents' most frequently asked questions about the budget, property taxes, transportation, and more. We focus on the budget because we want residents to know Lake County government continues to sustain its excellent fiscal standing.

Certainly, the recession brought significant budget challenges for all local governments. Facing sharp declines in revenues, we had to make changes in order to balance our budget. The good news is that by planning early and tightening our belt, we adopted a 2010 balanced budget that was \$6 million less than 2009. (Learn more under Budget Q&A).

The County Board's philosophy has always been: don't spend money we don't have. The Board has saved and used cash rather than accumulating debt. As a result, Lake County has very low debt and adequate reserves. This County has received the highest ratings from the independent financial rating firms Standard & Poor's and Moody's Investor Services. Lake County is one of only about 38 counties out of 3141 in the country that have AAA bond rating from these two agencies.

The Lake County Board continues to make progress on several other key initiatives including transportation, economic development, public safety, the environment and health services. We encourage you to learn more about these strategic goals and connect with county services on the county's website: www.lakecountyil.gov.

You can also sign up for county news updates. If you have any questions or comments, let us know. We appreciate your input.

Sincerely, Suzi Schmidt Lake County Board Chairman sschmidt@lakecountyil.gov 847-377-2300

What's Inside:

Budget Q&A

Transportation Update

Property Taxes Q&A

Election News

Central Permit Facility

Meet the County Board

Go Green



BUDGET Q&A

How has the economic slowdown impacted Lake County government?

Lake County experienced a multi-million dollar budget shortfall for 2010 due to general economic conditions, including declines in sales and business taxes. We continue to face budget challenges due to the lack of State funding for certain services.

I've had to cut my personal budget to make ends meet, what has the County done to cut back?

The FY2010 budget is \$6 million less than the previous budget. We obtained employees' input, and explored and evaluated strategies including: revenues, expenses, efficiencies, services, and new ideas.

Departments cut a total of \$3.5 million from their FY2010 proposed budgets, and identified new or increased revenue sources and efficiencies.

We also implemented cost-saving programs including holding vacancies and reducing employees' work hours for less pay. Additionally, some employees were laid off in departments where workload was down due to the slowdown in housing and construction. As a result, Lake County has a balanced budget.





season is a busy one!

include preservation, modernization, and expansion projects. County motorists will also across three come roundabouts and the ongoing construction of Washington Street through Gurnee. All of for pedestrians and bicyclists. the 2010 projects are posted on the Division of

Transportation Construction

Projects interactive web map.

Roundabouts are coming to Lake County

Construction of the first modern roundabout in our area will begin this summer at the intersection of Everett and Riverwoods in southeast Lake County. Modern roundabouts traffic move efficiently and offer important safety benefits.

The 2010 Construction Roads aren't just for cars! **Lake County connects** Lake County improvements bike paths and sidewalks

The Division of Transportation is working to identify opportunities Lake to link bike paths and sidewalks along Lake County highways. The goal is to fill in these gaps over time and improve the usefulness of Lake County highway corridors

The Millburn Strangler's days are numbered

Lake County is now well into a Phase I Preliminary

Engineering Study and Environmental assessment of IL US Rte 45 corridor at Millburn and Grass Lake Roads. This

notorious traffic bottleneck in north central Lake County is being improved **Using Collar**

County Transportation Empowerment Funds. Construction is expected to begin in 2014.

Know Before You Go

Motorists can get real time traffic congestion information due to

crashes and construction on www.lakecountypassage.com,

PASSAGE Highway Advisory Radio 1620 AM, and variable message signs. The PASSAGE network continues to grow! This summer, Lake County will add the Lewis Avenue and Grand Avenue corridors in Waukegan and employ wireless technology

to expand the PASSAGE network further into the Grandwood Park. Lake Villa, Lindenhurst, Wauconda. Lake Zurich and

Mundelein areas.

MORE ONLINE: Click Transportation

- ☐ Get Live Traffic Info
- Read Transportation Plans
- ☐ Route 45 Info
- Watch Videos:



"Talkin' Transportation"

<u>"Strategic Plan:</u> Progress Report"

PROPERTY TAXES O&A

If I think my tax bill is too high, is there anything I can do?

Government bodies have their own budgets and hold their own budget public hearings. Taxpayers can participate in the budget process at schools, fire districts, park districts, the County, municipalities and others. You can look at your assessment notice and tax bill to see a list of all your taxing bodies. Unless these government agencies cut spending levels, property tax bills will remain at current levels.

Taxpayers should look at their assessment notice closely to make sure they are getting all of the homestead exemptions that they can. These notices will be mailed in the fall.

State law allows for a process for taxpayers to appeal assessments. These appeals must be filed 30 from date the days the published. assessments are Taxpayers can visit the County's website for more information

on the appeal process.

Is the County Board responsible for my entire tax bill?

the Lake County collector, but this happen? By State law. most people don't realize that assessed values are county government only gets a small piece (7%). So, for a for three prior tax years. This house valued at \$250,000, only protects \$358 of your property tax effects of wildly varying real payment will go to county estate markets. Seemingly, this government. The rest goes to is beneficial when values are other units of local

government in your local community,

with schools getting the biggest piece (68%).

How is your property tax bill calculated?

Even when your property value drops, property taxes may Taxpayers write their check to continue to go up - how can

> determined by market values homeowners from going up and unfair when going down.

Remember, assessed value is only one part of the tax calculation. Several other factors can impact property tax Did local governing bills. boards approve higher budgets and higher levy ordinances to fund those budgets?

Were neighborhoods in your (other than yours) assessed lower due to some homes selling drastically below market value? That can result in a township-wide assessment average that is too low, in "equalization" which case raises the value of every property in the township. Also, are the districts taxing you subject to Property Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) or "tax cap?" If so, a district's levy rate is not "capped" when the levy is below limits set under PTELL.



- Access Property information and view comparable properties
- View and pay tax bill
- Watch Videos:

"Understanding the property tax process," "How is your tax rate calculated?" "Tax Cap" & more!





Sign up to receive the latest Lake County news and events, sent directly to your email. Click the "E-News Button on our homepage.



Election News: Power at Your Fingertips

The County Clerk's office created "Power Pages" to provide quick access to all election related information, and give voters, candidates, and the press oneclick to information. You'll also find a short video on navigating the powerful tools found under the election results section of the website. Whether you are interested in up-to-the minute results on election night, or analyzing past elections, the video will help you explore the variety of reports and customized views available at no cost.

MORE ONLINE:



- □ LakeCountyClerk.info
- □ LakeCandidatePower.info
- ☐ LakeVoterPower.info
- ☐ LakePresPower.info



Strategic Goal: Sustainability

3 Ways Lake County is GOING GREEN

- Improving energy efficiency in Facilities
- Developed green building and site

 development standards that provide
 incentives to encourage sustainable
 development practices
- Worked with the Wind Energy Task Force to develop a model ordinance for wind energy facilities

3 Things Lake County is doing to CONSERVE WATER

- Participating in water supply planning at the local and regional levels
- Participating in Northwest Lake County Water Planning
 Group, made up of eight other communities, to
 request a Lake Michigan water allocation from the
 Illinois Department of Natural Resources to bring
 Lake Michigan water to northern and western Lake
 County
- ☐ Increasing public awareness about water sustainability through an educational video series.

To make a difference, we all need to work together. Here are 3 things you can do to GO GREEN

- ☐ Follow the Curbside Recycling Guidelines compiled by SWALCO
- ☐ Reduce your use of paper plates, paper towels, and disposable food containers
- Turn off and unplug small appliances not in use, and shut down your computer at the end of the day.

MORE ONLINE:

- ☐ Read: State of Lake County's

 Water Supply, Strategy for a

 Sustainable Lake County,

 Curbside Recycling Guidelines, &
 other Green Tips
- ☐ Watch: <u>various videos on</u> <u>sustainability</u>

County Opens New Central Permit Facility & Changes Permitting Process

The Central Permit Facility, located at 500 Winchester Rd. in Libertyville, is a "one-stop-shop" to obtain permits for projects in unincorporated areas. By co-locating all of Lake County's permit functions, it allows for an integrated, streamlined and efficient permit approval Process.





- ☐ Connect with Central Permit Facility Services
- Watch Videos: "See Jane Get a Permit," "Ceremonial Opening."



Attention businesses and jobseekers:

Visit the Workforce Development website for a variety of career and training opportunities!

www.lakecountyil.gov/WorkforceDevelopment



Connect with your Lake County Board Member



Linda Pedersen lpedersen@lakecountyil.gov District 1 847-445-5504



Diane Hewitt dhewitt@lakecountyil.gov District 2 224-627-0883



Suzi Schmidt, CHAIRMAN sschmidt@lakecountyil.gov District 3 847-377-2300



Brent Paxton bpaxton@lakecountyil.gov District 4 847-746-9542



Bonnie Thomson Carter bcarter@lakecountyil.gov District 5 847-546-2888

Don't know your District? Find your County Board Member by



Melinda Bush mbush@lakecountyil.gov District 6 847-217-0053



Steve Carlson scarlson@lakecountyil.gov corourke@lakecountyil.gov District 7 847-356-4167



Collin O'Rourke District 8 224-456-9919



Mary Ross Cunningham mcunningham@ lakecountyil.gov District 9 847-721-1563



Diana O'Kelly dokelly@lakecountyil.gov District 10 847-833-1019



Pat Carey pcarey@lakecountyil.gov akyle@lakecountyil.gov District 11 847-223-1438



Angelo D. Kyle District 12 847-377-2300



Susan Loving Gravenhorst sgravenhorst@ lakecountyil.gov District 13 847-234-5741



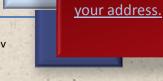
Audrey Nixon anixon@lakecountyil.gov District 14 847-689-1297



Carol Calabresa ccalabresa@lakecountyil.gov District 15 847-362-3993



Terry Wilke wilke@lakecountyil.gov District 16 847-546-9925





David B. Stolman dstolman@lakecountyil.gov District 20 847-883-9918



MORE ONLINE:

Ann B. Maine District 21 847-374-9787

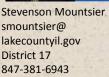


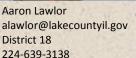
Michelle Feldman amaine@lakecountyil.gov mfeldman@lakecountyil.gov abassi@lakecountyil.gov District 22 847-903-6037



Anne Flanigan Bassi District 23 847-377-3954







Craig Taylor ctaylor@lakecountyil.gov District 19 224-805-6027 2 . X



Sign up for E-News from County Board Members, Elected Officials and Departments

Watch live and archived County Board meetings and Strategic Plan Progress Reports

Read: Lake County Strategic Plan



LCTV

Comcast 18 or 30 ____ AT&T 99

Lake County Website

email: Communications@lakecountyil.gov